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Security Council

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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 6971st meeting of the Security Council, held on 29 May 2013, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Central African region", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council reiterates its strong condemnation of the attacks and atrocities carried out by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and its violations of international humanitarian law and abuses of human rights. The Council condemns further the LRA's recruitment and use of children in armed conflict, killing and maiming, rape, sexual slavery and other sexual violence, and abductions. The Council demands an immediate end to all attacks by the LRA and urges the LRA to release all those abducted, disarm and demobilise.

"The Security Council welcomes the conclusions of the working group on children and armed conflict (adopted on 19 April 2013) concerning the situation of children and armed conflict affected by the Lord's Resistance Army. The Council calls for their full implementation.

"The Security Council welcomes the development of the implementation plan for the United Nations Regional Strategy to Address the Threat and Impact of the Activities of the LRA as well as other strategic documents. The Council urges the United Nations Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), in its coordination role, as well as the United Nations political and peacekeeping missions in the region and other relevant United Nations presences to enhance their efforts in support of the implementation of the strategy, as appropriate and within the limits of their mandates and capacities. The Security Council also calls on the international community to provide assistance where possible.

"The Security Council reiterates its support for the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative against the LRA (AU RCI-LRA), welcomes the finalisation of the Concept of Operations and other strategic documents required for the operationalisation of the AU-Regional Task Force (AU-RTF), and encourages the deployment of child protection advisers. The Council urges all regional governments to fulfil their commitments under the AU RCI-LRA, and encourages neighbouring states to cooperate with it, in order to end the LRA threat. The Council further encourages all states in the region to take measures to ensure that the LRA is not able to operate with impunity in their territory. The Council underlines the need for all military action against the LRA to be conducted in compliance with applicable international law,

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including international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law, and to minimize the risk of harm to civilians in those areas. The Council welcomes the steps taken to deliver an enhanced, comprehensive, and more regional approach to the humanitarian situation, including assistance to victims of sexual violence and other attacks and urges further progress in this regard.

"The Security Council underlines the primary responsibility of States in the LRA-affected region to protect civilians. In this regard, the Council welcomes the efforts undertaken by the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Republic of South Sudan and Uganda to end the threat posed by the LRA, and urges further efforts from these countries, as well as from other countries in the region. In this regard, the Security Council encourages those countries affected by the LRA which have not yet done so to establish Standard Operating Procedures for the reception and handover of LRA children to civilian child protection actors.

"The Council expresses concern at the recent pause of counter-LRA operations in CAR in the context of the current crisis in the country due to the seizure of power by force on 24 March 2013 by the Seleka coalition as well as the ensuing violence and looting, which worsened the humanitarian and security situation and weakened the institutions of the Central African Republic. Recognising the need in the short term for the Transitional authorities of CAR, Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the AU and the UN to strengthen their coordination to solve the current crisis in CAR as soon as possible, and emphasising that those responsible for any abuses or violations of human rights or violations of international humanitarian law must be held accountable, the Council encourages continued coordination to allow regional counter-LRA operations to resume in CAR as soon as possible. In this regard the Council calls on the Transitional Authorities in CAR to uphold their commitment to the AU-RTF and allow regional counter-LRA operations to resume without hindrance. The Security Council underlines its appreciation for Uganda's steadfast commitment and leadership to counter the LRA.

"The Council welcomes the efforts of MONUSCO in tackling the LRA. In this context the Council encourages further and reinforced efforts by MONUSCO to tackle the LRA including through training and capacity building of the FARDC, support to the Joint information Operations Centre (JIOC), and implementation of the DDRRR programme to encourage and facilitate further LRA defections.

"The Council notes the mandate of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) and the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to help protect civilians in LRA-affected areas in their respective countries, and urges their continued efforts to implement this mandate, as well as the mandate of the African Union/United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA) to cooperate and share swiftly information related to the regional threat of the LRA. The Council stresses the need for enhanced cross-border coordination, including through the adoption of common Standard Operating Procedures and swift information-sharing between these missions, as well as among all other actors in the region, to

better anticipate LRA movements and imminent threats of attack. The Council expresses concern about the continued reports of LRA attacks in the DRC during the first quarter of 2013, and calls on those MONUSCO forces operating in LRA-affected areas to reinforce their efforts to target and promote defections from the LRA through active patrols and increased information-sharing.

"The Security Council takes note of reports suggesting the existence of an LRA base in the disputed enclave of Kafia Kinga, on the border of CAR and between South Sudan and Sudan.

"The Council encourages the UN, AU and ECCAS, to work together, including through joint field assessments, to develop a common operating picture of the LRA's current capabilities and areas of operation, as well as to investigate the LRA's logistical networks and possible sources of military support and illicit financing, including alleged involvement in elephant poaching and related illicit smuggling. The Council calls on the Secretary-General to report on possible findings in his reports on implementation of the UN's counter-LRA strategy.

"The Council urges MONUSCO, BINUCA, UNMISS, and other United Nations actors in the LRA-affected region to continue to work with regional forces and non-governmental organizations to promote a common approach to defections and support the DDRRR efforts across the LRA-affected area. The Council highlights the importance of programmes in support of the release, return and successful reintegration of children abducted by the LRA, in particular those targeting community acceptance of such children.

"The Security Council commends efforts by international donors to provide humanitarian assistance to LRA-affected populations in CAR, DRC and the Republic of South Sudan. The Council reaffirms the requirement for all parties to allow safe and unhindered access for humanitarian organizations to the civilian population, in accordance with international law, including applicable international humanitarian law, and the UN guiding principles of humanitarian assistance. The Council expresses concern about the lack of regular humanitarian access to many LRA-affected communities in CAR and the DRC, including because of poor infrastructure, and encourages increased UN efforts and international donor support for humanitarian access.

"The Security Council recalls that the International Criminal Court's arrest warrants for Joseph Kony, Okot Odhiambo, and Dominic Ongwen on charges of, inter alia, war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, rape and forced enlistment of children, have yet to be enforced, and calls upon all States to cooperate with relevant national authorities and the International Criminal Court, in accordance with their respective obligations, in order to implement those warrants, and to bring to justice those responsible.

"The Security Council requests that the Secretary-General keep it informed on the activities of UNOCA, the progress of implementation of the Regional Strategy and the efforts being undertaken respectively by missions in the region and other relevant United Nations agencies to that end, including through a single report on UNOCA and the LRA to be submitted before 15 November 2013."